

## Heisel, Leanne

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From: Frank F Munshower [frankfmunshower@bresnan.net]  
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2008 12:42 PM  
To: Heisel, Leanne

My comments on wildfire management follow:

1. The pictures or reports of government employees (taxpayer employees) wrapping fancy and remote houses in fire retardent material is terrible PR.

The people with whom I associate are furious about this activity. News reports about supression efforts to save these homes of the wealthy aggravate the middle and lower classes. They should be discarded as part of wildfire supression activities.

2. Anybody who elects to construct or purchase a house in the forest/rural or forest/urban interface should pay special government taxes that are reserved for fire fighting activities. They should also be required to have full fire insurance.

3. The criteria directing wildfire supression activities should be:

- a. protect lives,
- b. protect recreational areas,
- c. protect critical wildlife areas,
- d. protect the lumber resource.

Homes of the wealthy should not be considered in wildfire supression efforts.

4. Closure implementation should occur earlier then it does now. Areas known to contain elevated levels of fuels should be closed before they are on fire.

Individuals who permit camping or other activities to cause fires should be held responsible and subjected to large fines. The present policy is supposed to do this but seems to be poorly enforced.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment wildfire management. I hope our legislature can do something to reduce this growing financial burden on the backs of the common people.

Frank Munshower  
1407 South Bozeman  
Bozeman, MT 59715

## Heisel, Leanne

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**From:** dleavell2@frontiernet.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 30, 2008 12:17 PM  
**To:** Heisel, Leanne  
**Subject:** RE: Request for Fire Suppression Comments

**Attachments:** Fire Suppression Interim Cmte edited.doc



Fire Suppression  
Interim Cmte ...

Leanne,

Attached are some comments from our three local and adjacent fire departments. We all participate in wildland fire fighting as well as structure fire fighting and have confronted problems for many years. With fires getting bigger, hotter, and lasting longer - and more people moving in the wildland urban interface - effectiveness and efficiency in wildland fire fighting operations is a concern to us all. Thank you for your committee's work in trying to find solutions in this area. Good luck - and please keep us posted. And - a reminder that our Fire Station would be glad to host the Libby meeting in June.

Thank you,

Dan Leavell  
Chief, Cabinet View Fire Dept.  
406-293-1290  
P.O. Box 322  
Libby, Montana 59923

**TO: Fire Suppression Interim Committee Input**  
**FROM: Cabinet View Fire Dept, Fisher River Valley Fire-Rescue, Marion Fire District (Joint Response)**  
**DATE: December 31, 2007**

At present, there are several tiers of firefighting resources within the State of Montana. Federal: Forest Service, BLM, BIA, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service; State: DNRC; County: Volunteer Fire Departments FSA's, Districts, Companies; and private contractors. Added to that and related to that are several layers of emergency services: Federal: Department of Homeland Security; State: Montana Disaster and Emergency Services; County (local): Lincoln County Local Emergency Planning.

Federal layers have many layers within that dictate and/or influence policy: NRCG, NWCG, National Fire Management Plan, Regional Fire and Aviation Management, Forest Fire Management.

All these layers, rules, regulations, and policies affect success of firefighting efforts on the ground. Add to this the prevailing cultural differences within each layer and the result does affect success of firefighting operations. Another effect to firefighting success is the difference in resource, funding, and training availability within each layer. Granted, differences in resource, funding, and training availability should exist and perhaps be commensurate with responsibility and liability, but the scales are far outbalanced to the Federal agencies and almost negligent to the local fire departments.

This greatly and negatively affects operational effectiveness. Wildland fires in Montana are now more intense, lasting longer, and covering more acres than ever before. More homes are built within the wildland urban interface than ever before. Tiers and layers of organization and regulation inconsistently interpreted and implemented (and confusing) coupled with more intense fires and imbalance of resource allocation is creating a potential critical mass in the wildland firefighting environment that will be to the severe detriment of people, homes, and our natural resources.

Federal and State resources based on land ownership and subsequent responsibility, have had more time to be established and coordinated – and have had more resources available. The real discrepancy exists with “local government” and private contractors. Local volunteer, rural fire departments throughout the State vary widely as to level of resource availability, training, and funding. Some fire departments don't have the volunteers to go out on wildland fires – time away from work and potential loss of the primary job doesn't allow this. Volunteers are normally older, have more time available, and are less likely to have the physical capability, training, and equipment to do the best job on wildland fires – or to even have the inclination to accept assignments on wildland fires. Fire departments are torn by leadership and constituencies whether or not to participate in wildland fires when they are inadequately funded to participate in their primary task of structure fire fighting. Private contractors are hesitant to invest in equipment and training costs, hiring, and time for seasonal firefighting jobs that vary

from year to year. And both local fire departments and private contractors are mostly lost in a sea of bureaucratic and political muck originating at all levels of the firefighting organization. Federal and State wildland firefighting agencies (in the State of Montana) do not fight structure fires. Private contractors in the State do not fight structure fires. The only entities in the State that fight both structure and wildland fires (the highest concern in the wildland urban interface throughout Montana) are the local volunteer (and sometimes municipal) fire departments.

Ironically, these are the least funded, most inconsistently managed and regulated, and the lowest priority for resources, funding, and training. The local, rural, and volunteer fire departments are also the most and best geographically available for wildland urban interface structure and wildland fires. Local fire departments are also the best potential resource to interface with private landowners for fire prevention. Overall, these fire departments are the most under-utilized, least trained, and most under-funded firefighting resources we have and mired in the most levels of Federal, State, and County bureaucracy and politics – and yet having the greatest potential to contribute towards operational effectiveness and success.

Volunteer service to communities is a stalwart to cultural success both nationally and State-wide. Volunteer fire departments are a tradition in Montana going back generations that would be a shame to undermine. Communities pay hard-earned wages for structure fire protection which should still be the primary job of local fire departments. However, there is increased pressure in our rural areas – especially those near and/or adjacent to the wildland urban interface – to allocate resources to wildland firefighting in addition to the primary responsibility of fighting structure fires. This presents great difficulty to our volunteer fire service – and presents a barrier to full acceptance by the “professional” Federal and State firefighting organizations.

The overall operational playing field needs to be more consistent and balanced to extract the greatest operational flexibility and success on the ground. The following are recommendations to rectify:

#### Fire Departments/Companies

1. Evolve local fire departments having the greatest potential for fire prevention – and structure and wildland fire suppression capability and need – into quasi-volunteer/professional entities. Streamline the bureaucratic and political tangle by giving fire departments immediate access and oversight to one State firefighting board of directors composed of firefighting Chiefs, Officers, and Heads of Departments. This would essentially be NRCG with full and primary participation by a State-representative fire department Chief(s) with a goal and responsibility to develop, train, fund, and support local resources.
2. State-subsidize local fire department funding above and beyond that which is assessed for structure fire protection by local communities. Pay firefighters and apparatus a decent hourly wage at Federal rates whenever assigned on a wildland fire – or structure fire

within a wildland fire incident. Streamline the payment process making pay for people and equipment much easier, fairer, and more direct than now exists.

3. Protect primary jobs when local firefighters are called on wildland fire incidents. This would extend the same protection to firefighters as given to Montana State National Guard personnel.

4. There is a good opportunity to offer vocational and/or for credit fire fighting courses through local community colleges. State-subsidized and coordinated by the State fire board of directors above, fire academies could be established and organized within rural communities at local community college campuses across the State. State-wide oversight can assure National qualification standards are met. Local community colleges can be organized as part of the fire academy to keep records of training and assist firefighters to progress through a career ladder.

#### Private Contractors

1. Respecting the private enterprise system, private contractors do not need subsidizing, but do need to have training opportunities available. Local community college fire academies (that will need to be initially State-subsidized) can be geared to private needs to develop progressive training in all phases of fire incident organization. Databases can be maintained as with local fire departments to keep track of training taken and training needs.

2. There needs to be a more streamlined and liberal process to hire private contractors that have proven utility and effectiveness. Competition is good and necessary – and standards need to be met – but hiring a contractor based on local value should be easier than it is.

#### Resource Dispatch & Coordination

1. There currently exists no state-wide standardized means of facilitating the ordering, dispatching and tracking of local government agencies' resources. While there are "pockets" of cooperative mutual aid dispatching, no uniformly effective and standard procedure assures timely notification and response of local agency units on a regional, intrastate or interstate basis. In time of critical need, bureaucratic red tape, archaic pre-response regulations and local preferences delay and inhibit initial attack or compromise support of state and federal units.
2. In reviewing the orderly dispatching, assembly and response of local agency resources in other areas throughout the western states, several highly proven models are in effect and have proven extremely beneficial in terms of both timely response as well as effective management of interagency resources.
3. A system established and disciplined in conjunction with regional or zone dispatch/communication centers with immediate access to pre determined agency resources; categorized in conjunction with the ICS kind and type

identification system, would assure dramatic improvement in response, coordination and utilization of resources.

4. Enhancing our expectation to comply with the tenets and principles of the NIMS should be a mandate. For too long our state has been without advocacy to accelerate participation in the Interstate Mutual aid system and the Intrastate Mutual Aid System. Both of which would generate expansion of And benefit of improved operational readiness and deployment.

The existing conflicting layers of often contradictory and arbitrary selection of local government units causes confusion, distrust and undermines interoperability, the essence of the NIMS.

### Training and Certification

While universal acceptance and support has been established for standardized training and qualification (NWCG & NFPA) of personnel, a lack of accountability stemming from administrators without real credibility is a source of valid apprehension on the part of line supervisors. Again, other states have implemented the State-initiated and maintained Peer Review Group method of credentialing eligible personnel.

The consensus of a State group representing agencies likely to utilize local personnel is positioned to verify eligibility or recommend steps necessary for credentialing.

For too long now, the expectation of entitlement has influenced resource selection. The annual statistics of Firefighter injuries and fatalities tend to support this connection.

January 30, 2008

Fire Suppression Committee  
c/o Leanne Heisel  
Legislative Services Division  
PO Box 201706  
Helena, MT 59620

Greetings:

Please enter this letter into the record of your Fire Suppression Committee (FSC). I am a professional forester, retired from the Forest Service with 33 years of federal and military service. Since then I have worked continuously with several Montana conservation organizations concerning conservation (natural resource) issues. I have 55 years of experience in my profession. While in the Forest Service I served as assistant district ranger, district ranger, timber and fire staff officer. I also served in other capacities. For the last 45 years I have lived in Montana.

Fire Committee member Rep. Bill Wilson of Great Falls is quoted in the 1/16/08 edition of the Ravalli Republic as saying, "We as a state need to get more involved in crafting solutions". I can certainly agree and I hope all Fire Suppression Committee members can agree on that as well.

In my opinion, the principle issue before your committee is not:

1. Fire suppression, per se.
2. Thinning stands of trees on federal forest lands (national forest, BLM, national parks and etc.
3. Logging off our state and federal forest lands.
4. Fire fighting operations on tribal or federal lands.
5. Finger pointing and playing the blame game.

The most pressing issue and question to be asked (and hopefully answered) , who should be responsible and accountable for fire protection for people who choose to reside and/or build their cabins, summer homes, outbuildings, residences, businesses, mega mansions or whatever within or adjacent to fire prone areas. .

Isn't it time for those folks to take responsibility for their decisions? Why should the rest of us taxpayers have to subsidize those fire prone area dwellers. Why should

U.S. Forest Service and/or State of Montana fire fighting personnel and equipment be dispatched to protect and defend their properties?

It is time, and time is of the essence, to develop some reasonable and effective solution. I would suggest the following.

The Montana State Legislature must pass legislation that requires all people who reside within or bordering forest or range lands that are fire prone to:

- . Form and/or to belong to rural fire districts.
- . Rural fire districts must be granted the authority and responsibility to require residents or other property owners within the district to (1) adhere to county building codes and maintenance requirements that are designed to reduce the risk from forest fire generated burning embers. (2) Through fire assessments on their property, fire district residents must pay the full cost of fire prevention, presuppression (engines, fire crews, etc.) and fire suppression.

If it hasn't already been done by the Montana Legislature, the Montana counties must have full authority and responsibility to:

- . Regulate how growth within the county occurs.
- . Require county wide comprehensive land use planning and zoning.
- . Regulate road location, design and construction standards for subdivisions and/or residences that insure safe ingress and egress for engines, water tenders, large trucks, and fire crew transport equipment.

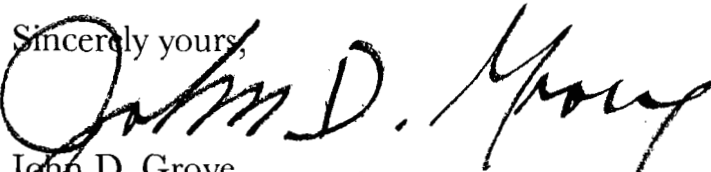
The FSC asked citizens what we think will happen in Montana with regard to fire protection (fire prevention, presuppression and suppression) in the next 10 years if there is no change in policy, practice or funding? A 12/30/07 Missoulian article titled "Plum Creek subdivisions could strain fire budget" provides some insight. I suggest committee members read it. In the article Ray Rasher, Executive Director, Bozeman-based Headwaters Economics, is quoted. "There is a real lack of accountability out there. The counties approve the subdivisions, Plum Creek sells the land, the developer builds the houses, the buyers move in and the public, a la the Forest Service, Bails them out. That has to change. We can't afford to keep writing the blank Check." Obviously it is a rapidly growing problem and it isn't only on Plum Creek ownership.

Credible scientific studies indicate that fire seasons in the northern Rockies are on a hotter and drier trend line. Our elected officials must develop some sound solutions to this very critical and rapidly growing problem. If local officials can't



do it at the county level, we need state legislation to force this issue. This is where the FSC should be directing their attention. Otherwise, if the problem isn't adequately addressed and solved, it will be as Floyd Wood, a lifetime Bitterrooter, rancher, logger and conservationist, might say; "we had best take a deep seat and a long rein." It will be a hard and very costly ride.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Grove". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

John D. Grove

PO Box 77, Stevensville, MT 59870

**Heisel, Leanne**

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**From:** BILL TASH [billtash@msn.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 30, 2008 9:27 PM  
**To:** Heisel, Leanne  
**Subject:** Fire Suppression Interiem Committee

Dear Ms. Heisel,

We are landowners directly in harm's way (adjacent to, and downwind) from an area of Beaverhead/Deer Lodge National Forest that has been identified as a Fire-Urban Interface Area. The acreage of Forest Land "down-fall jungle" contiguous to ours that needs management the most has been left out of designation because of a threat of litigation over goshawk habitat. Similar to other recent major fires in the upper Grasshopper Valley, it is not a question of if it might burn; but a matter of when it will.

This example may not be within the direct authority of the Legislative Interim Committee on fire suppression; except to encourage federal agencies to recognize the importance of coordinated pre- planning. This has a high priority especially in counties like Beaverhead where over 60% of the lands are Federal.

We would like also to submit the following ideas of ways to coordinate efforts and lesson the impacts on private landowners.

1) Include local volunteer fire chiefs and assistant chiefs on Type I and Type II management teams.

2) To ensure involvement by local rural fire departments, improve and increase training workshops for those individuals.

3) On Type I and Type II fires, rely more heavily on local fire departments. Currently the emphasis is on using contract crews. Contract crews are less motivated to extinguish fires simply because the longer the fire burns the more they get paid.

Thank you for bringing this to the committee's attention.

Sincerely, Bill Tash

cc: Grasshopper Volunteer Fire Department

1/31/2008

**Heisel, Leanne**

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**From:** Kalli Deschamps [alonze1952@yahoo.com]**Sent:** Wednesday, January 30, 2008 3:58 PM**To:** Heisel, Leanne**Subject:** Fire Suppresion

As the wife of a retired FS person who spent many of his years with the USFE putting out fires, we have discussed this problem many times, not to mention our own evacuation this past summer due to a fire that could have been supressed if handled in a professional manner. Instead we were evacuated from our ranch in a manner that need not have happened if the fires were supressed as they should have been shortly after they started. We believe that the manner used to detect fires at this time is only contributing to more and better fires. This happened much less frequently in the days of the fire lookouts. They could be detected and acted upon within hours and were not allowed to burn out thousands of acres as they are today.

Kalli &Ed Deschamps

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January 30, 2008

Fire Suppression Committee  
C/o Leanne Heisel; Legislative Services Division  
P.O. Box 201706  
Helena, Montana 59620-1706

Dear Ms. Heisel:

As a landowner impacted by wildfires on private, state and federal lands, I would like to provide some input on ways to improve the fire suppression efforts in our state. We have been involved in rural fire department efforts fighting fires and have a firsthand account of how suppression efforts have changed.

We would like to submit the following ideas in ways to improve efforts and lessen the impacts faced by private landowners.

1. Include local volunteer fire chiefs or assistant chiefs on Type I and Type II management teams.
2. To ensure involvement by the local rural fire departments, improve and increase training workshops for these individuals.
3. On Type I and Type II fires, rely more heavily on local fire departments. Currently the emphasis is on using contract crews. Contract crews are less motivated to extinguish fires simply because the longer the fire burns the more they get paid.

We appreciate the legislature addressing this important issue and will continue to provide input as the hearings across the state are conducted.

Sincerely,

*Richard J. Adwell*  
*Box 834*  
*Columbus Mt. 59019*

John A. Chase  
4436 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N.  
Great Falls, MT  
59405  
Jan. 30, 2008

Fire Suppression Committee  
c/o Leanne Heisel  
Legislative Service Division  
PO Box 201706  
Helena, Mt 59620-1706

Dear Senator Cobb and members of the Fire Suppression Committee:

I would like to submit the following comments regarding firefighting operations in Montana:

- \* I support the resolution recently passed by the Montana Association of Conservation Districts urging “the Forest Service, Congress, and the President of the United States to consider a revised policy which includes immediate suppression of fires in watershed drainages in drought years.” Because of ongoing drought conditions, it is imperative to take immediate action to suppress fires. Without rapid initial attack, fires become so large and intense that they are almost impossible to control.
- \* Private property needs to be protected from burning during a fire and from the physical and economic impacts incurred after the fire. A distinction needs to be made here, working ranch properties that have long been part of the rural landscape and have an economic basis for their existence should be given first consideration when it comes to protection. Rural subdivisions built in high risk areas and individual homes built in forested areas so that the owners can commune with nature are a different matter altogether.
- \* Rapid initial attack should significantly reduce the resources required for fire suppression, those resources should be utilized for fuels reduction projects.
- \* There are a number of accounts of alleged incidents of rural fire departments or individuals being at the scene of a fire and attempting an effort at initial attack, only to be “run off” by Forest Service personnel. In two instances, so the stories go, the fires turned into major blazes. This doesn’t seem to be a good way to do business.
- \* With the intensity of fires increasing (partly because of policy decisions), it takes more resources (money, manpower, and supplies) to control them. Intense fires are more likely to destroy the integrity and composition of the top soil and may have serious consequences for reestablishment of the forest. With hotter and larger fires, the risks of being a firefighter are certainly increased.
- \* Conflagrations produce very large quantities of particulates and carbon-dioxide which certainly has an undesirable effect on air quality. If one subscribes to the idea of global-warming being influenced by releases of carbon-dioxide, then we can expect that large fires will contribute to the problem.

\* After the great fires of 1910, the approach to fire management gradually changed to an attempt to extinguish every fire as rapidly as possible. I think that there is ample evidence to indicate that this was not a wise choice, it would seem that the current "Let it Burn" policy is just as wrong-headed, only at the other extreme. Please note the resolution passed by MACD does not request a return to the earlier failed approach to fire management. Hopefully, sometime in the distant future, common-sense on the issue will prevail. A copy of MACD's Resolution 07-01 on Wildfire Management is attached.

Thank you for listening,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Chase". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John Chase

**Resolution 07-01**  
**WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT**

WHEREAS, some fires on federal, state and private lands are a valuable tool to prevent catastrophic fires; and

WHEREAS, the resources these fires consume are crucial to the long-term survivability of all who enjoy and use our natural resources; and

WHEREAS, recent fires due to extreme drought have become more dangerous to private lands that adjoin where most fires occur; and

WHEREAS, the fires in the headwaters of most drainages are crucial to supplying water year-round to irrigators, stock waters and communities; and

WHEREAS, allowing these fires during drought years go uncontrolled have detrimental effects to the water supplies for many years to come; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montana Association of Conservation Districts at its November 14, 2007 annual meeting urges the Forest Service, Congress and the President of the United States to consider a revised policy which includes immediate suppression of fires in a watershed drainage in drought years

**Submitted by Chouteau County Conservation District**

**Passed Area III**

**MACD Committee Assignment: Soil Resource & Land Use – Do Pass as amended**

Dear Fire Suppression Committee:

I have enclosed a letter I have just finished.

Also I enclosed other letters I wrote in 2001 about the Roadless ANPR Comments and also a letter I wrote in 2006 to Senator Max Baucus about losses to ranchers and small tree farmers.

Sincerely

Barbara Boylen



Dear Fire Suppression Committee:

In reading "Wild Fire Audit ", (**11/30/06 Bozeman Chronicle**), the U.S. Forest Service says they are broke and need state and local government to pick up a bigger share of firefighting costs, that top 1 Billion a year. They are considering letting the wild fires burn. This will increase our local taxes. Having watched the **Derby Mountain Fire** of 2006 in Sweet Grass County close up and having been a victim, ( my beautiful summer pasture bordered the FS for 1-1/2 miles.) I saw the money was spent mainly on structures , while the incident commanders sat in their pickups, until the next structures needed to be protected. (Do you think the home insurers have anything to do with this ?)Of course, I am glad they protect structures, but that is only half the job.

In the same paper (Bozeman Chronicle 11/30/06) a federal judge in Missoula gave the order for the **Middle East Fork Fuel Reduction Project**, Montana's first hazardous materials reduction under President Bush's **Healthy Forests initiative**. The Judge's ruling was on the side of human safety. As a result, the Forest Service was being sued by two environmental groups, who did not want any commercial logging. Their reasoning was that there was not an adequate study to the **Soils**. (Have they ever seen the soils after a high intensity burn, the fish being killed, the resulting weed problem, the sterilization of the soils, the lost beauty, the lost timber which sucks up carbon emissions?)

This law suit slowed down any forest thinning and increased wild-fire exposure. This group also tried to stop forest thinning on the Boulder River south of Big Timber. This became life threatening in the fires of 2007, where church camps and cabin owners only had one way out.

These law suits are very costly to the Forest Service. In reading Kerry White's guest column in the (**12/2/06 Bozeman Chronicle**) He says that the Forest Service is considering closing campgrounds, trailheads, and recreational sites to save money. He goes on to say that 40 % of the Forest Service budget is spent on defending lawsuits and 42% is spent on fire suppression. He goes on to say that logging could put money toward the USFS budget. (Of course, he does not mention that the FS loses money on logging, mainly because the Canadian subsidized timber floods our markets and results in the loss of jobs and loss of incentive to manage our forests by logging at a loss),

Bozeman residents and residents around the state remember the last few summers of not seeing the mountains and breathing smoke for over a month, while millions of acres burned at a cost of millions of dollars. While this was being reported in the Bozeman Chronicle, organized groups in Bozeman seemed to only be worried about **Holcim Rubber Burning plant** polluting our valley. Of course many environmental groups have their home base in Bozeman, so maybe this has a chilling effect on sticking up for Forest Service Management. **Talk about not seeing the forest for the trees** Can the Chamber of Commerce expect Montana to keep it's reputation as the Last Great Place, when you can't see the mountains, can't breath, and must walk in totally burned forests?

I consider myself a conservationist and am very aware of the environment, as a native Montanan, from pioneer stock, who owns a 100 yr. old property, twice burned by fires originating on the Forest Service. But the "**Dude Environmental Movements**" suing the Forest Service are going to have to make a choice between, **NO FORESTS,(burned or closed) and letting the Forest Service do active timber management, including selective logging, brush removal, road barriers, helicopter pads, etc.** in an environmentally friendly way. The US government, should also protect northern states from having Canadian timber dumped here.

In Sweet Grass and Stillwater Counties over 300 families who owned private land were affected by the 2006 **Derby Mountain Fire**, which came from the Forest Service burning 209,115 acres, 60 % of which were private land or 123,495 acres. Cut-throat trout had to be moved to other streams because of the destroyed watersheds.

Here is my story of woel

The maps I saw the federal fire-fighters carry were only white with black dots to show where structures were. They were unaware of fences, private land, eagle nests, fish population, creek bottoms, treasured nature spots. Someone in charge just put a circle around my ranch and decided to burn every thing they could, just because I had a small tree farm. I was back burned on 3 sides, and even subjected to fire missals on areas I had paid to bull doze to save a few acres of my trees. They wanted straight lines of burn and since I had no structures my place it was sacrificed. Between 550-700 million board feet of timber was burned, lowering the value of my land. 5-1/2 miles of fence burned at a cost from my pocket of at least \$11,942, as the forest service does not build fences, (they are too poor, because of all the law suits from the environmentalists) but did provide some materials. I also was unfortunate to have the State Section Drift fence burn in the 1994 Black Butte Fire. The State does not build fences, so in order to save the governments re-seeding, and weed-spraying efforts , I may have to build another \$20,016 worth of fence. I have had to pay for the roads to be re-seeded, trees to be planted, and erosion bars to be put in the roads,

I am retired and in the 15% tax bracket. Except for this year I will be taxed on my sale of burned timber. (Other states have a 15% capital gains tax, where I will have to pay 21% because I live in Montana. ) There will not be much money left, as the logging company took half my deserved profit, because they charged me over \$45,000 for roads to access the timber. Talk about carpetbagging. Now the RY Timber Mill is shut down, so I guess I should be happy I got anything for my burned logs.

Of course my neighbors in Sweetgrass and Stillwater Counties were affected also. The Derby Mountain Fire was projected to cost \$573,084 for deferred grazing (2006-07) ; 43 miles of Federal fence at a cost of \$344,000 to \$430,000 ; 945 miles of private fence at a cost of \$9 million; weed treatment at \$34-\$125 /acre; re-seeding \$19.80/acre. Some of these figures were taken from the Bare Report. This amounts to millions of dollars. Some shouldered by the government and some by private individuals.

The point I am trying to make is ,can our farmers, our state, our nation continue to let the environmentalists dictate forest policy and continue to hug every tree in the forest until they are all black??? Instead of them suing the forest service, the environmental groups should be sued for causing us to lose our natural resources, and they should let the forest service manage the forest. I believe this would cost less than the fires and have a better outcome for all involved.

*Barbara Boylson*